(b) whether Tamil has been notified as a classical language; if so, when;

(c) whether there was any representation that the said notification has been found to be defective and warranted correction;

(d) whether it is a fact that the Tamil language, that has been notified as a classical language, has been allocated to his Ministry instead of having been kept under the Ministry of Human Resource Development; and

(e) by doing so, would it not loose certain privileges and benefits?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Government has declared Tamil as classical language. The Government has decided that the following benefits will be available to the languages declared or notified as classical languages:

(i) Two major international awards for scholars of eminence in Classical Indian languages are awarded annually.

(ii) A'Centre for Excellence for Studies in Classical Languages' is set up.

(iii) The University Grants Commission be requested to create, to start with at least in the central universities, a certain number of Professional Chairs for Classical Languages for scholars of eminence in classical languages.

(b) Yes, Sir. On 12th October, 2004 a notification to this effect was issued.

(c) No, Sir. However, the Committee of Linguistic Experts set up by the Government of India to consider future claims of any language for Classical Status is currently examining the whole issue including the need for any change in the eligibility conditions for classifying a language as classical.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) No, Sir.

Funds for NER

4031. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the chunk of funds it is pouring into the North-Eastem Region is being siphoned away by some officers acting in connivance with the underground outfits;

(b) if so, for how long this state of affairs has been going on and what is the amount involved;

(c) the steps being taken to identify such officers, amount involved and to fix responsibility; and

(d) what precautions Government would adopt to ensure that the sum of Rs. 9,308 crore earmarked in the latest Budget to develop the NE does not meet the same fate?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) to (d) There have been alleged reports from time to time that the development funds in certain areas in the North Eastern Region are being siphoned of by underground outfits in connivance with certain officers. There is no assessment available regarding the extent of funds extorted. To deal with the problem of siphoning of or diversion of NER funds Government have from time to time advised the North Eastern States to take penal action in such cases and to ensure that the funds are used for the purpose for which they are given. The Government have taken various measures to address the problem of insurgency in the North Eastern States including the activities of extortion by the insurgents. Besides holding peace dialogue with various insurgent groups, enhancing the capabilities of the State Police and development of socio-economic infrastructure; appropriate institutional mechanism have been built in at district level, at State Hqrs. and among the States in the NE Region to share actionable intelligence inputs available with the State and Central intelligence agencies and launch coordinated counter insurgency operations against insurgent groups.

Development of NER

4032. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH-EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the P.M. has recently addressed the reconstituted North Eastern Council in New Delhi;

(b) if so, the main thrust in his address; and

(c) what specific measures were outlined by the Prime Minister to ensure an integrated and holistic development of the North-Eastern Region?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) Hon'ble Prime Minister addressed the 1st Meeting of the reconstituted North Eastern Council on 12th April, 2005 in New Delhi.